



Establish seasonal ponds within two miles of good nesting cover

What to do:

Grain fields, fallowed fields with vegetation, and grazed pastures readily attract nesting ducks and pheasants. Grain fields are known to have high nesting success. But chick and duckling mortality is greatest during mid-to-late summer, when irrigation ponds, ditches, and sloughs are dry and aquatic vegetation and insects are gone. In fact, studies indicate that radio-tagged ducklings have traveled as far as two miles to water the first day after leaving the nest.

Build ponds near grain fields to catch rainfall, winter runoff, tailwater, or to hold pumped water. Place them in unused areas or in an unproductive field corner. Add water in early February, if possible, and maintain water levels until July 15.

Ponds that produce the most food for broods are usually less than 18 inches deep; they will also require periodic discing to control cattails. Shallow-sided ponds that are three feet deep or more (such as common tailwater ponds) require less maintenance, but are less productive. But you can make tailwater ponds more useful for duck broods by adding a shallow area for them.

Usually, it is not necessary to plant anything in the ponds: most duck and pheasant broods thrive on ponds or near

waterways with natural vegetation. You can plant perennial grasses in nearby upland areas to help keep out weedy vegetation. But avoid planting trees or tall vegetation bordering brood ponds as these areas become roosts for birds of prey and cover for other species that prey on chicks and ducklings. Be sure the pond can be easily drained or pumped, in case of a waterfowl disease outbreak.

Benefits:

- Provides crucial sources of food, water, and cover for duck broods, pheasant chicks, song birds, wading birds, shorebirds, and other wildlife during mid-to-late summer, when farm waterways are often dry.

- Offers valuable fall habitat for waterfowl and permanent water sources for pheasants, doves, and other upland game birds.

- Offers added income opportunities by providing sites for duck and pheasant hunting in the fall and winter.

- Can offer readily available locations for storing tailwaters during the spring and summer.

- Encourages beneficial aquatic insects, such as dragon flies and damsel flies.

Increase the survival of duck broods born in grain fields, fallowed areas, and pastures by providing seasonal ponds near these areas during mid-to-late summer.



DUCKS UNLIMITED